

Congressman Rothman Calls for Expedited Federal Support for Bergen, Hudson, and Passaic Counties

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2, 2011

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After touring areas in his Congressional District that were devastated by flooding from Hurricane Irene, Congressman Steve Rothman (NJ-9) wrote the enclosed letter to FEMA Region II Administrator Canton asking for additional federal support for Bergen, Hudson, and Passaic counties.

September 02, 2011

Ms. Lynn Canton

Region II Administrator
US Department of Homeland Security
Jacob Javits Federal Office Building
26 Federal Plaza, Room 1311
New York, New York 10278-0002

Dear Administrator Canton:

Thank you for your leadership in responding to the damage in New Jersey caused by Hurricane Irene. I appreciate the President's expedited response to our state's request for a major disaster declaration for New Jersey on Wednesday night. I was especially glad to hear that Individual Assistance was made available for residents of Bergen and Passaic Counties in my district, and that Hazard Mitigation funding was granted to all counties in our state.

However, I am extremely concerned that Hudson County was not included in the initial declaration for Individual Assistance, and that Bergen, Hudson, and Passaic Counties were not granted Public Assistance. I understand that Preliminary Damage Assessments will be conducted in these counties on Saturday, and that more counties will possibly be added to the emergency declaration based on these surveys.

I am writing to urge you to extend an Individual Assistance declaration to Hudson County, and Public Assistance to Hudson, Bergen and Passaic Counties.

Yesterday, I saw firsthand the devastation that Hurricane Irene caused in these three counties during an on-the-ground tour with local Mayors. Businesses and families in this area face major losses, and need help now. Many homes, businesses, schools and other public buildings experienced severe flooding, and several were completely destroyed. Roads and sidewalks suffered extensive flooding and damage as well. Residents in low-lying sections of Wallington were ordered to evacuate on Tuesday, and many had to be rescued by boat. Some still remain without power.

In Hudson County, specifically, Ronald Dawkins, a U.S. Postal supervisor, tragically lost his life while trying to escape his disabled car on a flooded street in Kearny. Highways, streets and bridges in Secaucus were still flooded and partially closed almost four days after the storm, affecting local residents and businesses. I saw severe structural damage to basements and watermarks almost four feet high in some of the houses I toured in Kearny and Secaucus.

While it is too early to give a monetary estimate of the damage, it is clear from the magnitude of the destruction in my district that recovery efforts will be beyond the means of state and local budgets. Individuals, communities, and businesses in my district will need federal help to rebuild and recover from this devastating storm.

Thank you for your timely consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

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STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

Member of Congress

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